

## Daily Devotional, May 18, 2021 Seeking Comfort and Hope for the Future

***“Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?” Jonah 1:7-8 (NIV)***

When you think about fear in the Bible, one of the stories that often comes to mind is the story of Jonah. The book of Jonah is a case study in the psychology of fear as we observe Jonah, the sailors on the ship, and even the citizens of Nineveh deal with their individual anxieties, worries and concerns. In particular, verse 8 is rather fascinating as the sailors pepper Jonah with various questions like, “who, what, and why.” They seem desperate for answers and are searching for someone to blame in the middle of the storm.

During another unusual spring, we are asking lots of similar questions about COVID-19. We also ask these types of questions when we see stories of disasters such as those of tornados that regularly appear this time of year both in Illinois and throughout the country. Questions such as these are part of the emotional and rational way we deal with our own fears. When we have uncertainty, we seek answers. When we have doubts, we seek justification or conclusions. When we worry, we want to find some evidence of control. When we are struggling, we look for reassurance. In these instances, and especially in times of fear, we look to our faith to find comfort and hope.

As ever-growing disciples of Christ, I believe we all come to the point of realizing that many of our questions may not be fully answered in this lifetime. When we are afraid, we look to God, we search the Scriptures, and we turn to other people of faith for hope. We find encouragement and support in knowing we are not alone. We remember that God reaches out and rescues us just like he did Jonah. And we gain strength for the future when we recognize that God has been with us every step of the way. So, when you have questions like the sailors did for Jonah, remember that you can put your faith in Christ and know that God will be with you, no matter what the circumstance.

***Prayer: Eternal Father, you know my past, present and future, nothing is unknown to you. When I worry about what is ahead of me, please calm my fears with the knowledge that you go before me. I will never be alone because you will always be with me. You have promised that you will not fail me or forsake me, and you are faithful to keep all your promises. Take away my fear and replace it with faith in your unending love. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.***